

Eastern Region Public Affairs, 2714 N. Mayfair, Spokane, WA 99207

<b>FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE</b>
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Contact: Al Gilson, Public Information Officer, (509) 324-6015  
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**WSDOT partners with Fire District to provide  
fire crew training opportunity**

The Washington State Department of Transportation has partnered with Spokane County Fire District 9 to provide a unique training opportunity for their fire fighters. The WSDOT has given permission to the fire district to use the former Mead United Methodist Church and an adjacent house to train crews on fire suppression and rescue techniques. Crews from Fire District 4 will also participate.

The training exercise is scheduled for Saturday, May 31<sup>st</sup>, beginning at about 8:00 a.m. The proper weather conditions must be in place for safety reasons.

The WSDOT purchased these properties, near the intersection of Farwell Road and Shady Slope Road, as part of the US 395/North Spokane Corridor (NSC) freeway project. Construction work for the new NSC facility in the vicinity of Farwell Road will get underway in late 2003. The structures were scheduled for demolition as a part of that project, but that work was put on hold when the fire district requested to use the site for training.

The fire district was especially interested in the church as it gives them a rare opportunity to train in an actual large structure fire situation. Most often, their fire training is limited to smaller buildings such as barns or surplus houses. The various large rooms, heavy beams, and other aspects of a large building are difficult to duplicate for training purposes.

Church officials welcomed the opportunity to help provide for a safer community with their approval of this training exercise at their former location.

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The Department and the taxpayers actually save money by allowing the use of these structures for fire training. The removal of the structures in this manner is approximately half the cost of conventional demolition techniques. The WSDOT has already had a private contractor remove all the hazardous materials from the buildings.

Although no state highways will be affected by this event, motorists are cautioned to be alert for slow traffic and possible congestion due to onlookers in the area.

Fire District 9 officials are responsible to make the final decision on weather conditions and safety issues to determine if the training exercise will commence as scheduled.

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Note to News Editors: Specific details regarding fire crew training procedures and techniques are available from Spokane County Fire District 9. Contact Jack Cates at (509)466-4602.